

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended)      A method comprising:  
automatically sending a discovery message to a node; ~~and~~  
enabling node access if a response to the discovery message is received; and  
automatically checking a link to the node to make sure that the node is still accessible.
2. (original)    The method of claim 1 including implementing a state machine with a  
connected and a disconnected state and automatically transitioning from the disconnected state to  
the connected state when a response to a discovery message is received.
3. (original)    The method of claim 1 including notifying a client wishing to access a  
node when a state transition is made based on a response to a discovery message being received.
4. (cancelled)
5. (currently amended)      The method of claim 4 1, including automatically checking  
said node at timed intervals in order to maintain a connected state.
6. (original)    The method of claim 1 further including automatically sending a message  
to determine whether the node is still accessible after said response to said discovery message is  
received.
7. (currently amended)      An article comprising a medium storing instructions that  
enable a processor-based system to:  
automatically send a discovery message to a node in response to a request to access the  
node; ~~and~~  
enable node access if a response to the discovery message is received; and  
automatically check a link to the node to make sure that the node is still accessible.

8. (original) The article of claim 7 further storing instructions that enable the processor-based system to implement a state machine with a connected and a disconnected state and to automatically transition from the disconnected state to the connected state when a response to a discovery message is received.

9. (original) The article of claim 7 further storing instructions that enable the processor-based system to notify a client wishing to access a node when a state transition is made based on a response to a discovery message being received.

10. (cancelled).

11. (currently amended) The article of claim ~~10~~ 7, further storing instructions that enable the processor-based system to automatically check the node at timed intervals.

12. (original) The article of claim 7 further storing instructions that enable the processor-based system to automatically send a message to determine whether the node is still accessible after said response to said discovery message is received.

13. (currently amended) A system comprising:  
a network interface; and  
a storage coupled to said network interface, said storage storing instructions that enable said system to automatically send a discovery message to a node over said interface to access the node and to enable node access if a response to the discovery message is received, said storage further storing instructions that enable said system to automatically check said node at timed intervals in order to maintain a connected state.

14. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein said system is a processor-based system.

15. (original) The system of claim 13 wherein said storage stores instructions to cause said system to automatically send a message to determine whether the node is still accessible after said response to said discovery message is received.